

CONGRESSMAN  
**Rick Boucher**



**Ninth District  
Virginia**

***Annual Congressional Activities  
Report for 2003***

# **I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: MY TOP PRIORITY**

## **A. SHOWCASING SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA**

Since its inception in 1987, my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program has stimulated the region's economy by bringing more than 4,000 jobs to the Ninth District. The program's successes continued in 2003:

1. **AT&T Wireless Call Center Opens in Russell County** - In June, the new AT&T Wireless Services Customer Service Center opened its doors in the Town of Lebanon following participation by the company in my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program. AT&T Wireless invested more than \$5 million in the shell building in Lebanon's Cumberland Plateau Regional Industrial Park. The company plans to hire a total of 470 employees by the end of the year.
2. **Verizon Call Center Opens in Wise** - The Lonesome Pine Regional Business and Technology Park in Wise is now home to the new Verizon customer service center. The facility opened in July of this year after a \$3.3 million investment for voice and data equipment and office furniture was made by the company. As a result, 45 new jobs have been created in Wise County with plans to hire a total of 61. The new facility culminates efforts which began in 2000, when I requested that Verizon place a new call center in the Ninth District.
3. **Harvest Pharmaceuticals Locates in Grayson County** - Harvest Pharmaceuticals has opened its customer support and distribution center at the Parson and Rives building in the Town of Independence. The company will market and distribute small scale and generally unavailable prescription pharmaceutical products to the patients who need them. In August of 2002, I introduced the executives of Harvest to Grayson County through my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program, and later that year, officials of the company informed me of their decision to place the Harvest center in Independence. The new facility celebrated its grand opening in December of this year and will create 30 new jobs in Grayson County within 30 months.
4. **MTM, Inc. Opens in Pulaski County** - In April, I extended a formal welcome to MTM, Inc., a company located in the Maple Shade Business Center. The company's employees take calls from individuals who need transportation for medical appointments and act as brokers with transportation providers. The company manages medical transportation for more than one million eligible clients. Its workforce in Pulaski now numbers 40, and job growth at the center is expected. The company made an initial

investment of \$1 million in bringing its operations to the Town of Pulaski, and it will continue to make further investments and add more jobs as it successfully competes for new contracts. The company hopes to double the number of employees at the Pulaski facility in the near future.

**5. Showcasing Southwest Virginia Tours Promote Region to Technology Companies**

- In 2003, my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program focused primarily on the attraction of technology-based companies to the region. I hosted seven tours for corporate executives who visited the Ninth District at my invitation during the year. My goal is to encourage a range of businesses such as database management, software design, reservations operations, polling firms, directory assistance centers and technical support services for the information technology industry to invest in Southwest Virginia. The attraction of these companies will be a continuing priority in 2004.

**B. TOURISM: A Major Southwest Virginia Potential**

A major focus of my office's economic development agenda is the expansion of Southwest Virginia's tourism economy which has tremendous growth potential. With the state's best outdoor experience and Virginia's most interesting cultural offerings, we truly have much to attract the traveling public.

- 1. Federal Funding Provided for Repairs to Scott County's Carter Family Fold** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency has honored my request to provide a federal grant in the amount of \$50,000 to the Carter Family Music Center to make improvements to, and increase the capacity of, the Carter Family Fold. The federal funding will be used to replace the existing seats at the Fold and construct an additional seating tier which will increase the capacity of the amphitheater by 200 seats. In addition, the roof will be replaced, and the wiring and heating systems will be upgraded. The federal funding will also be used to enlarge and improve the concession area of the Fold.
- 2. Wooden Trestle Improvement Project Launched on Virginia Creeper Trail** - At my urging, the federal government has provided \$750,000 to perform repair and upgrade work on the trestles of the Virginia Creeper Trail between the Towns of Abingdon and Damascus. Repairs will be made to the decking, wing walls, handrails and rail barricades of #14 trestle. In addition, trestles numbers 13 and 14, which cross State Route 711, will be reconstructed to coincide with the improvements which are being made to the road by the Virginia Department of Transportation. One of Southwest Virginia's most popular tourism assets, the Virginia Creeper Trail is enjoyed by more than 200,000 visitors annually.

3. **Dickenson County Tourism Boosted by Construction of Ralph Stanley Museum and Visitor Center** - \$625,000 in federal funding which has been provided at my request will enable the complete renovation of the historic Chase House in the Town of Clintwood into the Ralph Stanley Museum and Visitor Center. The Museum will commemorate the life and career of Dickenson County native Ralph Stanley and his enormous contribution to the advancement of our Appalachian heritage. It will feature exhibits which include extensive memorabilia donated by Ralph. Included in the exhibits will be his three Grammy Awards, articles of his stage clothing and a collection of his musical instruments. The museum will also feature an exhibit on the *O Brother Where Art Thou* and *Cold Mountain* movies in which Ralph Stanley performs.
4. **Construction Launched on Visitors Center at Fishers Peak** - Construction for the final phase of the Blue Ridge Music Center project at Fishers Peak in Carroll and Grayson Counties is now underway. The Center is a federally funded project which commemorates the historical roots of traditional American music in the Blue Ridge Mountains. At my request, the U.S. Congress has appropriated more than \$13 million in federal funding for the Center. Phase I of the project, which included an outdoor amphitheater which seats more than 2,000 individuals for performances, picnic facilities and visitor parking, is complete and has been in use since 2001. The Visitors' Center which is now under construction is the second and final phase of the project. One wing of the Visitors' Center will feature an exhibit gallery. In the facility's opposite wing, an auditorium will allow visitors to view educational movies, slide programs and interpretive talks regarding traditional mountain music and will provide an excellent setting for smaller concerts at the Music Center complex.
5. **Coordinator Hired to Develop Southwest Virginia Heritage Music Trail** - At my urging, a federal grant in the amount of \$40,000 has been provided to the Town of Clintwood to hire a coordinator for the Southwest Virginia Heritage Music Trail. Once completed, the Trail will be a driving route, complete with road signs which will mark the sites of significance in Southwest Virginia's musical history, including Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Grayson, Lee, Scott, Washington and Wise Counties and the Cities of Bristol, Galax and Norton.
6. **Federal Funding will Replace Roofs of Pocahontas Opera House and Exhibition Mine** - In July, I announced that at my request, \$20,000 in federal funding will be used to reimburse the Town of Pocahontas for additional expenses associated with replacing the roofs on the Pocahontas Opera House and Exhibition Coal Mine. This allocation of federal funding is in addition to a \$48,000 federal grant which I announced last year. The Pocahontas Opera House dates to 1895 and is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Registry. The Pocahontas Exhibition Mine opened in 1938, the first such exhibition mine in the nation. It provides an outstanding example of the history of coal mining and techniques used in the early days of the industry.

7. **Barter Stage II Café Is Now Open** - As one cornerstone of our effort to promote the tourism economy, eleven years ago I obtained an appropriation of \$1.5 million for a Ninth District Tourism development fund. Last year, I announced a loan of \$600,000 from that fund which was made to renovate and expand Barter Theater's Stage II. While work continues to renovate the facility to include a larger stage area, a more spacious and accommodating lobby and increased seating capacity from 140 seats to 167 seats, the new Café at Stage II is now open. The Café provides the community and Barter patrons with a convenient place to eat located in the same facility as Stage II and directly across the street from Barter's main stage.
8. **Wilderness Road Blockhouse Replica Constructed in Scott County** -With federal funding provided at my request, the *Wilderness Road* Blockhouse replica has been constructed at the Natural Tunnel State Park in Scott County to commemorate the historical significance of the Daniel Boone *Wilderness Trail*. The Blockhouse replica was modeled after a blockhouse built by Captain John Anderson sometime prior to 1778 near Wadlow Gap. It served as the last frontier station at the trail head of the *Wilderness Trail*. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1876, but it was most likely the place where Daniel Boone assembled the 30-member party which cleared the Trail for pioneer travelers.
9. **Visitor Center to be Constructed at Wilderness Road State Park** - At my request, the National Park Service, through its Land and Water Conservation Fund, is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$336,690 to the Wilderness Road State Park located 5 miles west of Ewing in Lee County to be used to build a Visitors' Center at the Park. The Visitors' Center will house a theater, museum exhibits, reception area, gift shop, conference room, meeting space, offices and restroom facilities. In addition, the facility will serve as an information clearinghouse regarding hiking, biking and other activities available to visitors of the Park.
10. **Funding Provided to Construct Rich Valley Community Center** - The U.S. Congress has honored my request for a special appropriation of \$180,000 to build the Rich Valley Community Center in Smyth County. The building will meet the needs of the Rich Valley Agricultural Fair and will accommodate a wide range of other community activities. It will have an auditorium with a stage and seating for 450 people, a reception room, conference room, fully equipped kitchen, storage space and restrooms. Rich Valley residents will be able to use the facility for many types of events including class and family reunions, weddings, or other community related activities. The new facility will encourage more visitors to the annual Rich Valley Fair.
11. **Cedar Bluff Nature Trail and Overlook Park Receives Federal Funding** - A federal grant in the amount of \$15,000 has been provided to the Town of Cedar Bluff in Tazewell County to construct a Scenic Overlook and Nature Trail. The federal funding will be



used to purchase railings and other equipment to be used to construct a moderately strenuous nature trail which leads hikers from the Cedar Bluff Overlook Park located adjacent to Route 460 between the Towns of Cedar Bluff and Richlands to the summit of the Bluff.

12. **“Ghost Train” Sculpture Placed on New River Trail** - Earlier this year, I participated with Pulaski County officials in the unveiling of the “Ghost Train” sculpture on the New River Trail. The sculpture is located near milepost 4 of the Trail in Pulaski County. In 1999, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded a \$9,000 federal grant to the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley to erect artistic structures along the New River Trail to recognize the significance of the former railroad line in shaping the history of the New River Valley.
13. **New River Trail to be Extended to Town of Pulaski** - Work has begun with federal assistance to extend the New River Trail into the Town of Pulaski and thereby increase tourism to the Town. The New River Trail extends from Pulaski County to the City of Galax along 56 miles of railroad path which was donated by Norfolk Southern in the late 1980’s. The Trail attracted approximately 1.2 million visitors last year.
14. **Federal Funding Provided to Improve Rock House and Boyd Museums** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, has provided grant funding in the amount of \$27,500 to the Town of Wytheville to enhance the exhibits displayed at the Rock House and Boyd Museums. The Rock House Museum is a residential museum which was the home of Wytheville’s first resident doctor, Dr. John Howler. The museum features exhibits pertaining to his life and medical practice. The Boyd Museum chronicles the history of Wythe County and includes artifacts pertaining to the polio epidemic, the Civil War and the role of the lead mines in the development of the County. The federal funding, which I requested and obtained, will be used to purchase new display cases, construct new exhibits and preserve the artifacts in both museums.
15. **City of Galax Receives Federal Support for Summer Concerts** - In May of this year, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$25,000 to the City of Galax, the Rex Theatre and the Galax Downtown Association. The federal funds have been used to continue the concerts associated with the Galax Leaf & String Festival, Rex Theatre and Blue Ridge Music Center. The Galax Leaf & String Festival is a partnership between the City of Galax, the Galax Downtown Association and the National Council for the Traditional Arts to celebrate the rich musical heritage of the City of Galax and to mark the beginning of the summer concert season at the Blue Ridge Music Center. This year’s festival was a three day event held from June 13 through 15 with performances from 27 traditional musical groups, crafts and instrument exhibits, a square dance and a Clogger’s Stage. Concerts were held at the Rex Theatre and at the Blue Ridge Music Center as part of the festival.

16. **Historic Lincoln Theatre in Marion to be Renovated** - At my request, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$50,000 to the Lincoln Theater in Smyth County to continue renovation work on the historic structure. The federal funding will be used to purchase and install theater equipment, to continue restoration on the Theater's six murals and refurbishment of the Theater's seats which were originally installed in the 1940's. Once renovations have been completed, the Theater will be used to host live performances, corporate meetings and to show classic movies.

### C. ENCOURAGING SMALL BUSINESS FORMATION

**Incubators Let New Businesses Share Costs and Obtain Technical Assistance** - In 1998, I created regional planning task forces and launched a Ninth District-wide effort to build small business incubators as a means of expanding the number of locally-owned small businesses in the region. The construction of small business incubators within the reach of all residents will assure that technical assistance and the opportunity to reduce start up costs are available to each person who wants to bring his or her good ideas to the commercial market. In 2003, these projects advanced:

- **Jacksonville Center Opens in Floyd** - The newly renovated Jacksonville Center has opened its doors in the Town of Floyd with the aid of \$328,000 in federal funding. The Center will serve as a small business incubator with a cultural focus, providing space for small businesses which primarily emphasize arts, crafts and other tourism related endeavors. It will also serve as a theater and community center. The new facility will house 20 small business tenants. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency has provided a \$133,794 federal grant to construct a dormitory on the premises. The dormitory will have the capacity to house between 8 and 10 students from other localities who will participate in week-long craft seminars.
- **New River Valley Competitiveness Center Expansion Now Complete** - The New River Valley Competitiveness Center Small Business Incubator in Pulaski County has been expanded to a facility 54,000 square feet in size with a small business incubator which has more than doubled in size. The small business incubator in the Competitiveness Center now has the capacity to house 27 start up companies. In 2000, I announced a \$2 million federal grant to assist with the expansion project, bringing to more than \$6 million the total federal investment in the Competitiveness Center to date.

- **Funding Provided for Hotel Norton Incubator** - At my urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, has provided a federal grant in the amount of \$138,890 to the Norton Industrial Development Authority to renovate the second floor of the Hotel Norton for use as a small business incubator. The facility has a total of 8 individual office spaces ranging in size from 250 square feet to 800 square feet.
- **Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator in Washington County Construction Commenced** - At my request, the federal government is providing more than \$1.9 million in grant funding to build the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator in Abingdon's new Stonemill Business and Technology Park. The project is a joint undertaking of Washington County, the City of Bristol and the Town of Abingdon. The Incubator, 40,000 square feet in size, will house 33 individual offices, 4 office suites and 4 manufacturing spaces and will focus on technology-based companies which will provide 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs to residents of the region.
- **Additional Incubators Planned for Ninth District** - I am currently working with community leaders in a number of counties and cities to plan additional incubator facilities. I will be urging the award of federal funding in 2004 for these projects:
  - ❖ ***Alleghany County/City of Covington:*** I have been working with Alleghany County and City of Covington officials to convene a task force for the purpose of developing a small business incubator which will serve both Alleghany County and the City of Covington.
  - ❖ ***Town of Haysi:*** Dickenson County leaders are currently planning a specialty incubator. The facility will focus on small businesses which prepare food products.
  - ❖ ***Lebanon and Grundy:*** A recently completed feasibility study recommends the construction of incubators in Lebanon and Grundy. During 2004, I will seek federal funding for these facilities as well.
- **Encouraging Localities to Build Technology Parks** - I am encouraging Ninth District localities to build a new generation of industrial parks that will prove attractive to technology-based companies as a means of diversification of the region's economic base. The technology parks will have advanced communications capabilities, open spaces, walking paths and other amenities appropriate to technology-oriented companies. A series of technology parks has been completed, and others are either under construction or being planned:



- ❖ ***Radford Business Technology Park:*** Federal grant assistance totaling nearly \$100,000 was provided in 2003 to the Radford University Foundation to be used to develop the architectural and engineering plans for the Radford University Business Technology Park.
- ❖ ***Stonemill Business and Technology Park:*** Construction has begun for the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator, the first component of the Stonemill Business and Technology Park. \$500,000 in federal grant assistance has been provided to construct an access road to the new park, and next August, technology-related small businesses may begin moving in to the new Park.
- ❖ ***Lebanon Technology Park:*** Federal grant assistance in the amount of \$1 million is assisting the Town of Lebanon with site development work for the new technology park. It is expected that the Lebanon Technology Park will be ready for occupation early next year.

#### **D. FARM ECONOMY SUPPORTED**

1. **Protecting Southwest Virginia's Burley Tobacco Growers** - Burley tobacco production has an honored history in Southwest Virginia and is a major source of economic support both for the families that grow tobacco and for the communities in which they reside. Addressing their needs is a high priority, and I am pleased to report on steps that I took in 2003 to provide assistance to the burley tobacco farmers of our region:
  - ***Legislation Introduced To Make Substantial Federal Payments To Tobacco Farmers*** - I co-authored legislation to make substantial federal payments to both active tobacco growers and inactive quota owners. The legislation would eliminate the cost of leasing, retain federal price supports and assure that tobacco farming in Southwest Virginia continues through a system of licenses issued to active farmers.
  - ***20<sup>th</sup> Annual Tobacco Growers' Conference Held In September*** - At my annual tobacco growers' conference in September, expert speakers, including the head of the Burley Tobacco Stabilization Cooperative in Knoxville, Tennessee, a representative of the Virginia Farm Bureau, an executive of the Burley Tobacco Growers' Cooperative in Lexington, Kentucky and a noted Washington County Extension Agent made presentations on federal legislation, innovative tobacco growing methods and other matters of interest to our region's tobacco farmers.

**2. Federal Government Provides Disaster Assistance** - Southwest Virginia has recently experienced a variety of natural disasters, including a persistent drought during 2002 and a period of excessive rain in 2003. The federal government provided the following assistance to our region in response to these events:

- ***Drought of 2002:*** In February of 2003, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture honored my request to declare federal disasters as a result of the 2002 drought. As a result of the declaration, farmers in Alleghany, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Patrick, Pulaski, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington and Wise Counties and the Cities of Covington, Galax and Norton who suffered crop losses due to the drought may be eligible to receive financial assistance from the federal government.
- ***Livestock Compensation Program:*** In February, the Congress passed legislation with my strong support which appropriated \$365 million to assist livestock producers who exhausted their supply of hay for livestock because of the drought in 2002. The legislation funded the Livestock Compensation Program and the Livestock Assistance Program to provide direct federal payments to qualified farmers. Qualified livestock included: beef cattle, dairy cattle, buffalo or beefalo, sheep and goats.
- ***Excessive Rain:*** Farmers in Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Henry, Lee, Patrick, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington and Wise Counties who have suffered crop losses due to the excessive rainfall in 2003 may be eligible to receive financial help from the federal government as a result of a disaster declaration made by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture at my request. Each of these localities are eligible by virtue of either being declared a primary disaster area or by being located directly adjacent to another locality which was declared a primary disaster area.

**3. Sustainable Development Timber Processing Center** - In June, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$63,900 for the Sustainable Development Center in Castlewood. These funds will be used to upgrade and expand the existing secondary wood products Processing Center at the Appalachian Sustainable Development Corporation and to provide support for the marketing of environmentally friendly products. This is the fourth major federal investment in an innovative approach to the promotion of sustainable forestry practices in the region. The goal of sustainable development is to ensure that as many trees grow back as are harvested, and its widespread use will ensure that Southwest Virginia retains its abundant hardwood forests.

**4. Organic Produce Farmers Receive Federal Assistance** - At my request, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided a \$25,000 federal grant to establish a revolving loan fund for organic producers of fruits and vegetables in Southwest Virginia. Each year, organic producers are required to undertake a comprehensive certification process

to be federally certified as organic farmers. The loan fund will be used to assist organic farmers with part or all of the \$400 to \$600 personal cost of the annual federal certification process.

5. **Virginia Farm Bureau Honors** - In December, I was presented with the Virginia Farm Bureau's Distinguished Leadership Award for my work in Congress on agricultural issues of importance to Southwest Virginia. This award is given to one Virginian annually for work on behalf of Virginia's farmers and agriculture economy. Earlier this year, I also received the Virginia Farm Bureau's Gold Congressional Leadership Award for my efforts on behalf of Agriculture in the Congress.

## **E. INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT**

1. **Funding in 2003 Gives More Southwest Virginians Access to Water and Wastewater Services** - In 2003, nearly \$36 million in federal funding was awarded to construct and improve drinking water systems and public wastewater systems throughout Southwest Virginia. Obtaining the federal funding to place publicly provided drinking water in every Southwest Virginia home is a high priority of my office. More than 4,700 Southwest Virginia homes will receive publicly provided drinking water or sewer service as a result of projects launched with federal funds in 2003. In 2004, I will be seeking a comparable level of federal funding for further system development.
2. **Funding Restored for Appalachian Regional Commission** - In January, the President proposed reducing the budget for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) by 50 percent for fiscal year 2004, a move that threatened the survival of the agency. I strongly opposed the President's recommendation, and I am pleased to report that the U.S. Congress has now approved a \$66 million budget for the ARC for the coming year. This funding level is equal to that provided to the ARC last year and will ensure the continued viability of an economic development agency which provides tremendous benefits to the economy of the Ninth District.
3. **Grundy Flood Control and Redevelopment Project On Track and On Schedule** - For the sixth consecutive year, the federal government is making a significant contribution to the Grundy Flood Control and Redevelopment Project. At my request, \$16.4 million in direct Congressional appropriations will be used in 2004 to construct the ringwall, fund voluntary floodproofing and acquisition projects, complete construction on the vehicular access bridge between the redevelopment site and the existing town, design a pedestrian bridge and initiate the relocation of the Town's police station. In 2003, site preparation for the redevelopment area was finished and construction was completed

for the new relocated Town of Grundy Volunteer Fire Station. The Grundy project will bring major flood control improvements, new highway construction and a large new commercial redevelopment center which will give a major economic boost to Buchanan County.

4. **Construction Underway for Dickenson County Childcare Center** - In March, ground was broken for the federally funded Dickenson County Childcare Center in the Dickenson County Technology Park. The facility of 10,000 square feet will be the first licensed daycare center in Dickenson County and will care for up to 107 children. The construction of the \$1.4 million facility is being funded completely through federal sources. The Childcare Center is expected to be complete early in 2004. It will be an asset in the effort to attract new employers who will be able to provide new jobs to Dickenson County residents.
5. **Construction Begins on Wytheville Community Center** - In the Fall, construction began on the Wytheville Community Center on land adjacent to Wytheville Community College. The new center is funded by a federal low interest loan of \$8 million which was committed in 2002. When complete, the new center will have indoor and outdoor swimming pools, extensive recreation facilities and conference meeting space that can accommodate more than 1,000 people. The new facility will enable Wytheville to become a hub of regional conference activity with a corresponding boost to Wythe County's travel economy.
6. **Construction Set to Begin for New Dam at Big Cherry Reservoir** - Final details are now being completed to enable the construction for a new dam at Big Cherry Reservoir near Big Stone Gap. With \$5.35 million of federal funding in hand, a new dam will be constructed approximately 200 feet downstream from the existing structure. The new dam will provide a greater measure of safety to the residents downstream from the existing dam and will enable the Town of Big Stone Gap to sell water service to neighboring communities, including the City of Norton, the Town of Appalachia, the Town of Pennington Gap, the Dryden Water Authority, the Scott County Public Service Authority, the Lee County Public Service Authority and the Wise County Public Service Authority.
7. **Communities Receive Federal Assistance for Fire Departments** - During 2003, I participated with a number of Ninth District fire departments in the successful effort to obtain \$3,334,113 in federal assistance for the purchase of new equipment. Local fire departments which received federal assistance include: Adwolfe, Appalachia, Atkins, Barren Springs, Bluefield, Bristol, Clearfork, Clifton Forge, Covington, Draper, Dryden, Fairlawn, Floyd, Fries, Goodson Kinderhook, Haysi, Hillsville, Honaker, Independence, Iron Gate, Jewell Ridge, Laurel Fork, Max Meadows, Nebo, Newbern, Norton, Patrick Henry, Patterson, Riner, Roanoke, Rugby, Sharon, Snowville, Speedwell, Tannersville, Tazewell, Washington and Wytheville.

## **F. EDUCATION: PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION**

1. **Congress Approves \$5.6 Million for Virginia Tech's Bioinformatics Institute** - At my request, and the request of U. S. Senator John Warner, the U.S. Congress has appropriated \$5.6 million to Virginia Tech's Bioinformatics Institute to further its work in creating a common database of information for all government agencies involved in the assessment of biological security threats. This is the third year in which we have obtained federal appropriations for Virginia Tech's work in Bioinformatics. In 2002 and 2003, federal appropriations totaling \$7.5 million were provided to undertake the development of the biological security database. The most recent appropriation of federal funding brings to \$13.1 million the total federal investment in the Institute to date.
2. **Southwest Virginia Coal Research Program Receives \$3 Million** - The U.S. Congress has honored my request to provide a special appropriation of \$3 million for the Center for Advanced Separation Technologies (CAST) at Virginia Tech to continue the Center's work in developing leading edge clean coal technologies. The federal funding will assist Virginia Tech's world-class research focused on utilizing ultra fine coal particles that heretofore have been discarded in coal waste ponds. Commercialization of fine coal utilization technology offers the promise of a far more productive coal economy for our region and the nation.
3. **University of Virginia's College at Wise to Develop an Integrated Science, Technology and Engineering Program** - In August, I announced a \$53,439 federal planning grant to develop a strategic plan for an Integrated Science, Technology and Engineering (IST&E) Program at the University of Virginia's College at Wise. The presence of an engineering program in Wise will expand the educational opportunities available to Southwest Virginia residents and serve as a valuable economic development tool by adding another group of highly trained technology based workers to our region's workforce.
4. **Mountain Empire Community College Receives Federal Grant for Education Technology** - More than \$1.8 million in federal grant funding is being provided at my request to MECC over the next five years to develop new Internet and distance learning courses. The college will develop new Internet based course offerings, and train faculty in their use.
5. **Computer Learning Center and Public Internet Access Site to be Established at Newport Community Center** - At my request, the Appalachian Regional Commission provided a federal grant in December in the amount of \$49,000 to the Newport Community Action Committee to purchase and install the computer equipment necessary to establish a public Internet access site and computer laboratory at the Newport Community Center in Giles County. Approximately 20 computers will be made available for public use.



6. **Southwest Virginia Community College Receives Federal Assistance** - In 2003, I obtained federal grant funding totaling \$267,044 for Southwest Virginia Community College to purchase and equip a Fiber Optic Mobile Learning Unit for use as a mobile classroom/laboratory, to expand the capacity of the Fiber Optic Technician Lab in Hansonville, and to create a new fast-track Workforce Employability Readiness Program.
7. **Carroll County Public Schools Expands Health Services Program** - With \$66,000 in federal funding, the Carroll County Public Schools will expand its Student Health Services program. The Health Services program offers students opportunities throughout the year to obtain dental screenings and basic physical examinations on the school grounds thanks to the use of mobile units which travel among the 10 public schools in Carroll County.
8. **Federal Loan Aides Acquisition of Christiansburg-Shawsville Head Start Building** - In July, I announced the provision of a \$240,700 low-interest federal loan to New River Community Action, Inc. to purchase the rented building which houses both the Christiansburg and Shawsville Head Start Centers. This provision of federal funding will ensure the continued operation of the Head Start Center.
9. **Patrick County Education Foundation Establishes Workforce Readiness Program** - Congress approved my request for a federal appropriation of \$500,000 to support the work of the Patrick County Education Foundation (PCEF). \$282,000 was used to establish a Workforce Readiness Training Program in conjunction with Patrick County Public Schools Adult Education Program. \$218,000 was used by the Foundation for its highly-successful College Access Program. The Patrick County Education Foundation is a useful model which I will be encouraging other 9<sup>th</sup> District localities to implement.

## **G. TRANSPORTATION: THE LINK TO A BROADER ECONOMY**

1. **Federal Funds Provided for Coalfields Expressway** - \$39.5 million in federal grant funding is being provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission to perform design and engineering work along Route 460 in Buchanan County for the Coalfields Expressway. \$21.6 million of the federal funding will be used to develop engineering plans for a 6.2 mile stretch from Looney's Creek to Bull Gap, and \$17.9 million is being used to develop plans for a connector road on the Coalfields Expressway from the Kentucky State line to the Breaks Interstate Park. In 2004, I will continue my work with Senator Warner to obtain additional federal money for this much needed highway and the economic development benefits its construction will bring.

2. **December Groundbreaking Signals Construction of Final Segment of Route 600 in Smyth County** - In December, I was pleased to participate in the groundbreaking for construction of the final segment of Route 600 in Smyth County. Over the years, I have obtained \$19 million in Congressional appropriations for the project which will provide direct access from Interstate 81 at Chilhowie to the Mr. Rogers National Recreation Area near Konnarock. The improved access will reduce the travel time from Konnarock to I-81 from 40 minutes to 15 minutes, promote safety for the users of the road and boost the tourism economies of Smyth, Grayson, and Washington Counties. All Construction work will be completed by December of 2005.
3. **Tolls Should Not be Placed on Passenger Vehicles as Part of I-81 Upgrade** - In the Fall, I announced my opposition to the placing of tolls on passenger vehicles to finance the upgrade of I-81. I also urged that a major rail project paralleling I-81 be employed in order to divert some of the truck traffic from the roadway to rail lines.
4. **Improving the Ninth District's Airports** - The presence of well developed local airports is an essential tool in attracting new employers to the region. In 2003, the following successes were achieved in improving the Ninth District's airports:
  - ***Mountain Empire Airport:*** In June, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$84,600 to the Mountain Empire Airport serving Smyth and Wythe Counties to enable the design of an expanded apron for aircraft parking.
  - ***Tazewell County Airport:*** At my urging, the Federal Aviation Administration has provided a federal grant in the amount of \$29,400 to the Tazewell County Airport to construct a glide path lighting system on the runway of the Airport. The system will be used to provide the optimal glide path for planes and will be used both day and night and in all weather.
  - ***Virginia Highlands Airport:*** The U.S. Department of Transportation provided a \$150,000 grant to the Virginia Highlands Airport to enable the design of an apron to expand the space available for aircraft parking. I am now working with Washington County officials to obtain the funding needed to extend the runway at the airport to accommodate large corporate jets.
  - ***Buchanan/Dickenson Airport:*** I am now working with local governments in Buchanan and Dickenson Counties to build a new large general aviation airport that will serve both counties and the Breaks Interstate Park. A feasibility study which I commissioned two years ago was completed earlier this year, and a \$300,000 award of federal funding in 2003 will be used to site the new facility on land adjacent to the route of the Coalfields Expressway.

5. **New River Valley Airport Receives Federal Support for Foreign Trade Zone and Port of Entry** - At my urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$69,740 to the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance to develop a Technical Assistance program for small businesses located within 90 miles of the U.S. Customs Port of Entry and the Foreign Trade Zone at the New River Valley Airport. The Technical Assistance Program will inform interested companies about the advantages of the nearby Foreign Trade Zone and Port of Entry.

## **H. NINTH DISTRICT CONFERENCES CONDUCTED IN 2003**

1. **Ninth District Burley Tobacco Growers' Conference** - In September, more than 300 of the region's burley tobacco growers attended my annual conference during which information was provided on federal legislation which would provide substantial payments to growers and to quota owners. Farmers also received information regarding innovative growing and harvesting practices.
2. **Annual Southwestern Virginia Technology Council Dinner** - In May, I hosted in cooperation with the Southwestern Virginia Technology Council the group's annual dinner meeting. The meeting highlighted the Council's accomplishments during its fourth year and served as a planning session for the group's expanding role in the advancement of technology throughout the region.
3. **Virginia Coal Conference** - Also in May, in conjunction with the Eastern Coal Council, I hosted a conference addressing matters of importance to the future of Virginia's coal industry and reported on my work as Ranking Member of the Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, including legislation which I introduced to promote the use of coal through the advancement of clean coal technologies.
4. **One Care: A Ninth District Health Care Conference** - In September, I hosted a conference for health care providers, local government officials and social services agency representatives from throughout the Ninth Congressional District. During the conference, I introduced One Care, an innovative concept being developed in conjunction with Departments of Social Services, health care providers and community action agencies throughout Southwest Virginia to provide more complete access to a full range of medical and human services to the uninsured and the under-insured.

5. **Ninth District Conference on Small Business** - In May, I hosted a conference small business owners and prospective small business owners. Topics included financing for a start up business, services provided by small business incubators, and government contracting opportunities.

## II. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

As co-founder and co-chairman of the Congressional Internet Caucus and as a senior member of the Committees on Commerce and the Judiciary, I am deeply involved in the development of the federal policy for telecommunications, intellectual property and the Internet. In 2003, these policy initiatives advanced:

- A. **Digital Media Consumers' Rights Act** - In January, I introduced legislation backed by a broad coalition of consumer groups and technology companies to preserve the ability of consumers to use digital media in their homes in the manner most convenient to them. Many of the uses that consumers make of music, movies or other content, such as recording tracks from a music CD they have purchased on their computer hard drive, do not violate historic copyright law. However, a law passed in 1998 took away many of these personal use rights for material delivered in a protected digital format. The legislation I have drafted restores the traditional personal use rights to consumers who lawfully acquire copyrighted works. It also ensures that equipment manufacturers will continue to have the right to design and produce products for which there are substantial lawful uses. Given the intention of some record labels to add technology to CDs that would block people from making personal use copies, the legislation also requires these non-standard CDs to be labeled so that people are aware before purchasing the CD that it cannot be copied.
- B. **Internet Internet Policy Membership Surpasses 170** - With a membership of 173 Representatives and Senators, the bi-partisan, bi-cameral Internet Caucus which I co-founded in 1996 and now co-chair has become the largest and most active caucus in the Congress. It is an increasingly valuable educational forum as Congress addresses a range of policy issues related to the Internet.
- C. **Consumer Privacy Protection Act** - In April, I introduced legislation to protect and enhance consumer privacy, both online and offline. The measure is designed to set nationwide baseline privacy protections. It requires all merchants who gather personal information about consumers to disclose what information is collected and how that information is used. Consumers are then given an opportunity to decline to have the

information about them collected. Consumers are also given an opportunity to limit the sale or other transfer of such information to third parties.

**D. Ninth District Satellite Television Consumers Receive Local Broadcast Channels -**

Many residents in the Ninth District live in areas too remote to receive quality local broadcast or cable service. Satellite television is an excellent alternative for these television consumers, but until recently it has had its disadvantages. Satellite subscribers in Southwest Virginia have been deprived of access to local stations which supply important emergency information, sports, weather, and local news coverage. I have long urged satellite television providers to begin offering local television stations to satellite TV customers in Southwest Virginia. In 2003, both DISH Network and DirecTV agreed to honor my requests.

- ***DISH Network Extending Local-into-Local for the Bristol and Roanoke Markets:*** In May, I announced that EchoStar Communications, the corporation which owns DISH Network, will begin providing 'local-into-local' service, through which local broadcast stations are uplinked to the satellite and then retransmitted into the markets of their origination, to satellite television customers in the Tri-Cities and Roanoke markets. Local-into-local service is now available to Roanoke market DISH Network customers, and the local broadcast stations are expected to be available to customers in the Tri-Cities market early in 2004.
- ***DirecTV Provides Local Channels for Subscribers in Roanoke Market:*** In early June, DirecTV announced that local broadcast stations would be made available to DirecTV customers in the Roanoke market. The new 'local into local' service from DirecTV is now available.

**E. Dickenson County Wireless Integrated Network Launched -** In October, I participated with Dickenson County officials in the formal launch of DCWIN, the Dickenson County Wireless Integrated Network, which is a truly innovative means of providing wireless high speed Internet access to the residents and businesses of Dickenson County at an affordable price. Wireless links have been extended to nearly all of Dickenson County's public offices to test the technology, and work has begun to enable access to the network by all residents and businesses within the Town of Clintwood. Preliminary deployments have occurred to some households and businesses within the Town, and it is expected that the entire county will have access to the technology within one year.

**F. Russell and Tazewell Counties to Build Fiber Optic Infrastructure for Internet Access -** The Bristol Virginia Utilities Board will use \$1.6 million in federal grant funds I requested to install high bandwidth fiber optic backbone lines from Abingdon along Route 19 to the Cumberland Plateau Regional Industrial Park in Lebanon and then along Route 460 to Richlands. The fiber optic backbone is the first step in bringing



broadband telecommunications services, including high speed Internet access, to the residents and businesses of Russell and Tazewell Counties. The availability of reasonably priced high speed Internet access will be a distinguishing feature of our ongoing efforts to attract new employers with technology-oriented high-wage job opportunities to Southwest Virginia. High speed Internet access will also be made available to the schools in the two counties which will enhance distance learning opportunities, and the broadband services will create opportunities to establish additional telemedicine sites in the area. The installation of the fiber optic backbone will enable residents and businesses in Russell and Tazewell Counties to enjoy broadband Internet access in the future.

- G. Town of Duffield Gains Access to High-Speed Broadband Services** - At my request, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, provided a \$500,000 federal grant to the Scott County Telephone Cooperative to deploy high speed broadband services in Duffield. The deployment of the broadband technology will bring high speed Internet services as well as new television and telephone services to residents and businesses in the community. In addition, a space in the small business incubator in Duffield will be renovated to serve as a public access center with computers linked to the Internet which will be available to the public without charge.
- H. Haysi Electronic Village Launched** - Haysi in November became the latest 9<sup>th</sup> District Community to launch an electronic village project with a fiber optic infrastructure linking various locations in the town for high speed Internet access. More than \$250,000 in federal funding enabled the project.

### **III. HEALTH CARE: IMPROVING ACCESS FOR SOUTHWEST VIRGINIANS**

- A. Ninth District Leads Nation in Telemedicine Capability** - For the past several years, I have been seeking federal funding to establish telemedicine links from hospitals and clinics in the region to the UVA Hospital in Charlottesville. With 49 connected health care facilities, the Ninth District now has more telemedicine sites than any other Congressional district in the nation. Telemedicine enables Southwest Virginia residents to obtain advanced diagnostic services and other forms of specialized care from the UVA Hospital while avoiding the time and expense associated with travel to Charlottesville. Telemedicine opens a new era of medical treatment with access to medical specialists which has previously been unavailable for many rural residents. In 2003, federal grants brought telemedicine service to the following clinics:

- ***Galax, Carroll, Grayson Counties:*** A telemedicine link has been established with \$26,000 in federal funding between Twin County Regional Hospital and the University of Virginia's hospital in Charlottesville. The new site serves residents from the City of Galax and Carroll and Grayson Counties.
- ***Buchanan County:*** This summer, telemedicine service went online at Buchanan General Hospital in Grundy. The site offers new and enhanced medical services to Buchanan County residents.
- ***Giles County:*** Federal funds received in 2002 have been used to establish telemedicine service at the Carillion-Giles Memorial Hospital in Pearisburg. The site has been equipped with a videoconferencing system, two monitors, a computer, an electronic stethoscope, a standard document camera and a high resolution camera.
- ***Grayson, Smyth and Washington Counties:*** In November, telemedicine service also became available at the Stone Mountain Health Services Clinic in Konnarock.
- ***Scott County:*** In April, I announced a provision of federal funding to establish a telemedicine site at the Clinch River Health Services Clinic in Dungannon. The equipment has been purchased and installed, the medical staff has been trained and the telemedicine service is now available to Scott County residents.
- ***Dickenson County:*** In November, a telemedicine link was established with \$25,000 in federal funding at the new Haysi Medical Clinic.
- ***Wythe County:*** A telemedicine link has been established with \$21,000 in federal funding between the Wythe County Community Hospital and the University of Virginia's hospital in Charlottesville. The federal funding has been used to purchase and install a new computer, monitor, videoconferencing equipment, electronic stethoscope, document camera and a hand held patient examination camera for clinical imaging. The telemedicine connection is being provided through a high speed T-1 data line and is now available to Wythe County residents.
- ***Carroll, Floyd and Patrick Counties:*** In September, telemedicine service became available to the residents of Carroll, Floyd and Patrick Counties at the new Tri-Area Health Clinic in Laurel Fork.

**B. Congress Passes Program For Health Insurance for the Recently Unemployed** - In the Spring, Congress gave final approval to a proposal similar to the one I authored along with Congressman Virgil Goode, who represents Virginia's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. The program we proposed extends a major new health insurance benefit to people who lose their employment and who qualify for Federal Trade Readjustment Assistance. Under the new law, the federal government now pays 65% of the premium

so that individuals may keep for a one year period the health insurance they had while working. Prior to the passage of the measure, the employee could keep the insurance for one year but was responsible for the payment of the entire premium.

- C. **Haysi Medical Clinic** - With more than \$2.5 million in federal funding, the Haysi Medical Clinic is now open to serve the public. The new clinic provides laboratory, mental health, dental, X-ray, telemedicine and Black Lung clinic services in addition to traditional medical care. Adult daycare community and childcare centers are currently under development and will be constructed in the Haysi Clinic Park.
- D. **Stone Mountain Health Services Purchases Building in Pennington Gap** - At my request, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, is providing a federal low-interest loan in the amount of \$1.6 million to Stone Mountain Health Services to purchase and renovate the former VAMCO number 4 building in the Pennington Gap Industrial Park. The organization currently leases space. Once renovations are complete, the building will serve as the new operational headquarters for the organization.
- E. **Tri-Area Health Clinic** - In September, the new Tri-Area Health Clinic and Pharmacy in Laurel Fork opened its doors to serve as a community health center for the residents of Patrick, Carroll and Floyd Counties. The newly expanded clinic is 4 times the size of the older clinic. A federal low interest loan financed the construction of the new clinic and pharmacy.
- F. **Access to Mental Health Services Expanded** - At my urging, \$600,000 in federal funding is being provided to the Mental Health Association of the New River Valley to expand its Pro Bono Counseling Program. The program provides mental health services to low income and uninsured persons at no cost to the patient. The federal grant will benefit Southwest Virginia residents living in Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties and the City of Radford.
- G. **Radford University Establishes Dental Health Services Network** - An Oral Health Services Network has been created to provide preventive and primary oral health services to more New River Valley residents by providing those services, at no cost, to the uninsured and those with low incomes. Dental Services which are offered include cancer screenings, cleanings, fillings, extractions, dry socket treatments and nutritional/oral health counseling. Federal grant funding in the amount of \$200,000 launched the new service.

## IV. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

- A. **Upper Tennessee Watershed Receives Federal Grant for Protection and Revitalization** - In May, I announced the provision of federal funding in the amount of \$800,000 to the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable to preserve and restore the Upper Tennessee River Watershed which is located in Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina. All of Lee, Russell, Scott, Washington and Wise Counties and portions of Dickenson, Smyth and Tazewell Counties are part of the Watershed and will benefit from the program.
- B. **Bill To Promote The Greater Use Of Coal Introduced** - Earlier this year, I introduced legislation which will provide financial incentives to electric utilities which use advanced clean coal technology in their new electricity generating plants. The measure, which is included in the comprehensive energy legislation now pending in the Congress, will benefit the economy of Southwest Virginia by encouraging the construction of new coal fired power plants and increasing the demand for our region's coal.
- C. **Federal Flood Assistance Provided to Portions of Southwest Virginia** - The President honored my request in 2003 to declare counties in Southwest Virginia disaster areas following the severe winter storm and subsequent flood in February. As a result of the declaration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided financial assistance to individuals and businesses in Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Roanoke, Russell, Tazewell and Wise Counties and the City of Norton. In addition, FEMA provided financial assistance to local governments and not for profit entities in Buchanan, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Henry, Lee, Montgomery, Scott, Wise and Wythe Counties and the City of Norton to assist in defraying the costs associated with flood recovery efforts.
- D. **Major New Federal Contracts Awarded to Radford Army Ammunition Plant** - The longstanding effort to bring new Department of Defense contracts and new jobs to the Radford Arsenal in which I have been engaged with U.S. Senator John Warner for many years is bearing fruit. This Fall, the Department of Defense awarded to the Radford Arsenal a five year contract for the manufacture of TNT, valued at more than \$130 million. TNT production will add as many as 150 new jobs to the workforce at the Radford Arsenal, conferring a welcome benefit on the economy of the New River Valley. In addition, a second Defense contract has also been awarded to the Arsenal to develop a new 25 millimeter training round for the Department of Defense potentially adding more than 100 additional employees in future years.
- E. **HOPE Center Opens in Wytheville** - In October, renovations assisted with \$17,000 in federal funding were completed on the HOPE Center in Wytheville. The facility will house a range of non-profit agencies providing services to the public under one roof. The HOPE Center will ease administrative costs for participating agencies and provide a one-stop shop at which the public can access services.

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